

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
Room 306
James T. Foley U.S. Courthouse
Albany, New York 12207

TO: Court Users
FROM: Hon. Robert E. Littlefield, Jr. and Richard G. Zeh, Sr.
DATE: March 1, 2004

RE: Performance Appraisal Liaison for the Court

In an effort to ensure that the court is responsive to its users, the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of New York is initiating a Performance Appraisal process and is inviting comment from all court users, including attorneys who practice here, professionals involved in bankruptcy cases, and the general public. It is believed that the process would be more comfortable, and ultimately more effective, if the feedback is given to a well respected intermediary who has the trust of the participants, rather than to the Clerk or Judge. In the case of evaluating the performance of a particular judge, it seems that the best way to provide both meaningful, constructive input for us, and solicit thoughtful, honest comments from participants is to have an attorney who never practices in the court serve as that intermediary.

In light of these considerations, Judge Littlefield has asked Attorney Mae D'Agostino to be the intermediary for the Bankruptcy Court in Albany. We are pleased to report that Attorney D'Agostino has accepted Judge Littlefield's invitation to serve as the intermediary (a/k/a "performance appraisal liaison") for the court. For those who are not familiar with her, Ms. D'Agostino is a partner with D'Agostino, Krackeler, Baynes & Maguire, P.C. of Albany, who has previously served on judicial screening and evaluation committees. She understands well the need to hold in confidence the names of the parties she speaks with, filtering the information as necessary so that she can relay it to Judge Littlefield and Richard Zeh in a manner that does not imply by circumstance the parties' identities.

The goal of this process is to solicit and convey information that will help Judge Littlefield, Richard Zeh, chambers' staff, and the Clerk's Office better serve the public. We are seeking your opinions and observations about the entire Bankruptcy Court experience, including, but not limited to, judicial demeanor, the courtroom environment, treatment of attorneys, professionals, and parties, efficiency of motion calendars and trials, professionalism of court staff, responsiveness of the Clerk's Office and chambers' staff to inquiries and requests for assistance, and the overall tone of the court.

Your candid participation and offering of constructive comments are essential to the success of this process. Ms. D'Agostino needs and invites contact from practitioners, professionals involved in the bankruptcy process, and the general public, by phone, in person, or by e-mail. She will meet with Judge Littlefield and Richard Zeh on a regular basis to convey suggestions and observations based upon the input given to her. Also, from time to time, she may like to

take it upon herself to initiate conversations with practitioners. Should you be contacted, please feel free to chat with her or not. Information that Ms. D'Agostino transmits to Judge Littlefield and Richard Zeh will not be made public in any way. Ms. D'Agostino's telephone number and e-mail address are:

Mae A. D'Agostino, Esq.
D'Agostino, Krackeler, Baynes & Maguire, P.C.
16 Sage Estate
Albany, New York 12204
Telephone: (518) 434-9807
Facsimile: (518) 434-9826
E-mail: mad@dkbmlaw.com

On behalf of Judge Littlefield, Richard Zeh, chambers' staff, and the entire Clerk's Office staff, we would like to thank you for any future input and feedback that you provide. This will help us as we strive to provide quality services to all court users.